

**AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS**

1. (Currently amended) A suture storing device, comprising:

an elongated shaft having a longitudinal axis, a proximal end and a distal end;

a handle provided at the proximal end; and

a cavity within the handle for storing at least one strand of suture, wherein the cavity is provided with a hatch, the hatch having a tie-down bar attached to its inside and integral to the hatch, the hatch being configured to pivot, together with the tie-down bar on its inside, relative to the longitudinal axis of the elongated shaft.

Claims 2-3. (Canceled)

4. (Previously presented) The suture storing device of claim 1, wherein the hatch forms an angle with respect to the longitudinal axis of the elongated shaft.

5. (Original) The suture storing device of claim 4, wherein the hatch forms a zero degree angle with respect to the longitudinal axis of the elongated shaft when the hatch is in a closed position.

6. (Previously presented) The suture storing device of claim 4, wherein the angle is different from a zero degree angle with respect to the longitudinal axis of the elongated shaft when the hatch is in an opened position.

7. (Original) The suture storing device of claim 6, wherein the angle is of about 10 degrees to about 170 degrees with respect to the longitudinal axis of the elongated shaft.

8. (Original) The suture storing device of claim 1, wherein the at least one strand of suture is further provided with a needle.

9. (Original) The suture storing device of claim 1, wherein the elongated shaft is configured to accommodate an implantable device.

10. (Original) The suture storing device of claim 9, wherein the implantable device is a suture anchor or an implant.

11. (Currently amended) A device for housing sutures attached to surgical needles, comprising:

an elongated shaft having a longitudinal axis, a proximal end and a distal end;

a handle provided at the proximal end; and

a cavity within the handle for storing at least one strand of suture provided with at least one surgical needle, the cavity being provided with a pivotable hatch, the pivotable hatch having a tie-down bar attached to its inside and integral to the hatch, the pivotable hatch being configured to pivot, together with the tie-down bar on its inside, relative to the longitudinal axis of the elongated shaft;

wherein the tie-down bar is further provided with a slot for storing the at least one surgical needle; and

wherein the pivotable hatch is configured to be integral with the handle when the pivotable hatch is in a closed position.

12. (Original) The device of claim 11, wherein the at least one strand of suture provided with the at least one surgical needle is stored within the handle when the pivotable hatch is in the closed position.

13. (Original) The device of claim 12, wherein the at least one strand of suture provided with the at least one surgical needle is wrapped around the tie-down bar when the pivotable hatch is in the closed position.

14. (Previously presented) The device of claim 11, wherein the pivotable hatch is not integral with the handle when the pivotable hatch is in an opened position.

15. (Original) The device of claim 14, wherein the pivotable hatch forms an angle with respect to the longitudinal axis of the elongated shaft when the pivotable hatch is in the opened position.

16. (Original) The device of claim 15, wherein the angle is of about 10 degrees to about 170 degrees with respect to the longitudinal axis of the elongated shaft.

17. (Original) The device of claim 11, wherein the elongated shaft is configured to accommodate an implantable device.

18. (Original) The device of claim 17, wherein the implantable device is a suture anchor or an implant.

19. (Currently amended) A method of dispensing a surgical suture, comprising the steps of:

providing a suture housing device comprising: a cannulated elongated shaft having a longitudinal axis, a proximal end and a distal end; a handle provided at the proximal end; and a cavity ~~adjacent~~ within the handle for storing at least one strand of suture, the cavity being provided with a pivotable hatch, the pivotable hatch having a tie-down bar attached to its inside and integral to the hatch, the pivotable hatch being configured to pivot, together with the tie-down bar on its inside, relative to the longitudinal axis of the shaft, the pivotable hatch being integral with the handle when the pivotable hatch is in a closed position, and wherein the surgical suture is coiled around the tie-down bar;

actuating the pivotable hatch so that the pivotable hatch forms an angle with respect to the longitudinal axis of the elongated shaft; and

deploying the surgical suture from around the tie-down bar.

20. (Original) The method of claim 19, further comprising the step of attaching a surgical needle to the surgical suture.

21. (Original) The method of claim 20, further comprising the step of attaching an implantable device to the surgical suture.

22. (Original) The method of claim 19, wherein the angle is of about 10 degrees to about 170 degrees with respect to the longitudinal axis of the elongated shaft.